

TREATMENT OF BUILDERS.—One of the contracts on the West Riding Union Railways being nearly completed, some cottages were required to be built for road-side stations and crossings; and two individuals were asked by one of the agents of the contractor to tender for the building of them. The tender of P. was 140l. that of T. 93l. or 92l. P. being a favourite, was told the amount of the other's tender, and was again asked to revise his; he, no doubt, thinking he would be favoured, offered to build them for 110l.; but I suppose it would have been too barefaced to have given them to him to do for more than 92l. so he ultimately got them (three of them) by reducing his tender to 91l. 15s. Comments upon such acts, by me, are useless after your oft-repeated, but just and powerful remarks; but the contemptible meanness of those who could ask a man (and that a poor one) to devote his time in making an estimate, and to tell him that if he was as low as possible he might get them all to build; and then, with the promise on his lips, to examine the tender given by him in all faith as to an honourable man, for the base purpose of giving the contract to a favourite of his own, at a fraction less, to avoid the appearance of partiality.—I say such conduct deserves the reward of all acts which are opposed to morality and justice.—H.

VICTORIA DOCK, HULL.—The formal opening of this dock took place on Wednesday in last week. The area of the dock and its half-tide basin is about 15 acres. The length of quay round both is 15-16ths of a mile, the quantity of quay-room nearly 20 acres, of which 13½ are round the dock, and 6½ round the basin. The sill of the 60 feet entrance to the dock is laid two feet lower than that of the Humber dock. The east end of the dock, which is 468 feet wide, is sloped with an inclination of 4 to 1, and laid with granite paving stones. The breadth of slope or quay above high water of spring tides is 200 feet. The north quay is also sloped. The entrance is half a mile eastward of that of the harbour. The form of this dock is irregular, to suit that of the citadel, to which it forms a second moat. In construction the following materials have been used:—

Timber	350,000 cubic feet.
Stone	2,376,000 cubic feet.
Earth work	937,000 cubic yards.
Mortar	21,500 cubic yards.
Iron	60 tons.

The plans for the last link of the present series of docks at Hull, namely, the Drypool Basin, and entrance to Victoria Dock, await the sanction of the Admiralty, which, according to our authority, the *Hull Packet*, is expected forthwith. Nearly 20 acres of dock will thus have been added of late years to the Hull shipping accommodation.

SMOKE NUISANCE.—Mr. Simon, the city medical officer of health, has reported, to the Commissioners of Sewers, favourably on the general objects of the Smoke Prohibition Bill, as highly desirable both for health, for economy in cleansing, and for other reasons, but unfavourably on its extent and restrictions, being limited to the smoke of fixed steam-engine furnaces, whereas the nuisance from locomotive steam-engine furnaces, both on the river and by rail, is equally great, as is that from many furnaces altogether unconnected with steam. The passing of such a measure, however, even in its present state, he concludes, will sharpen mechanical invention and ultimately economise the expenditure of fuel, not only among those compelled by this Bill to consume the smoke now wasted, but even in private dwellings, to the special profit of individuals, and the general benefit of the public.

METROPOLITAN SEWERS COMMISSION.—A monthly court was held on 5th inst., Lord Ebrington in the chair, when it was ordered that not less than 100 copies be made from the engraving of the block-plan of the metropolis; and authority was then granted for the performance of sewage-works estimated to cost about 11,500l., including 7,900l. for improvement of the sewage of Holloway, by enlarging Hackney-brook sewer. In allusion to sewers near London and Blackfriars bridges, the chairman said they were only temporary, till their general plan was carried out. The other business related chiefly to the abatement of nuisances.

LAMP-LIGHTING BY ELECTRICITY.—As many of our readers may recollect, we some time ago suggested means for simultaneously lighting, and subsequently for extinguishing, the gas-lamps of a whole town or district, the lighting to be effected by galvanic action, and the extinction by the electro-magnet, arranged in the same apparatus, so as to turn off as well as turn on the gas. In quoting the following particulars by the Paris correspondent of the *Times*, we think it worth while noting these preliminary facts:—"A rapid and scientific mode of lighting and extinguishing public gasburners has been invented by a person named Villatte. The opening of the burner of each lamp is covered with a piece of soft iron, mounted upon a hinge. In connection with this is a wire extending from a galvanic battery the entire length of the service of the gas-lamps, and close to the orifice of each burner is a small slip of platina. The soft iron, becoming a magnet when acted upon by the electric fluid, opens or closes the orifice according to the motion imparted to it; the platina ignites when it is necessary to light the lamps; and thus every lamp in a large town may be lighted simultaneously, or extinguished in the same way, by a different action on the magnetized iron." N.B. THE BUILDER is very well known in Paris.

PARISH MAPS AND OTHER MATTERS.—Under this title a very sensible letter has been publicly addressed by Mr. C. R. Walsh, M.R.C.S., a Superintending Inspector of the Board of Health, to the parochial authorities of the parishes and unions of St. George, Southwark, St. Saviour, St. Olave, and Bermondsey, exhorting them to obtain parish maps, for sanitary noting, and provide parochial dwellings and lodging-houses for the industrious poor, almshouses for the decayed poor of good character, parish dispensaries and infirmaries, street orderlies, &c. As to the maps, Mr. Walsh says—"To my surprise I find that such a map was published in 1815, and that the engraved plates might be altered so as accurately to represent the features of the present day at a cost of about 25l. for each parish. A guarantee to take fifty copies at 10s. would ensure this map being completed in less than a month. . . . The great mortality from cholera on the south side of the Thames is an undeniable fact. Much difference of opinion exists as to its causes. Such a map would be an unquestionable indication of an honest desire to investigate these causes by affording every facility for the observation and comparison which are needed to trace them."

GREAT SALE OF LAND AT BIRKENHEAD.—For the land situate in Birkenhead Park the bidding was brisk, and most of the lots sold at an advance upon the upset price, which ranged from 5s. 6d. to 9s. a yard, in lots of from 3,000 to 29,000 yards each. For the other land belonging to the commissioners, called the Cemetery Estate, the forest land, and land adjoining the market, there was no bidding. Previous to the sale, we understand, the commissioners disposed of land in the park privately to the value of 33,000l.

ANTS.—The *Medical Times* says that ants are easily dislodged by pouring lime-water into their abodes, and as easily poisoned by arsenic.

THE KINGSTON "KINGS' STONE."—We mentioned a short time since that the corporation of Kingston had listened to those who had prompted rescuing from obscurity the stone on which the Saxon Kings were crowned, and setting it up on a pedestal. We are now informed that this Coronation Stone will be placed on a septagonal block of stone, six feet in diameter, and 15 inches thick, standing in the centre of seven stone pillars, connected together by an iron railing. These pillars, and the septagonal form of the monument, are in allusion to the seven kings crowned in the town, and a penny of each monarch is to be placed under their respective names. The shafts of the pillars are of blue Purbeck stone, polished, and the capitals of Caen stone. The spot chosen for the monument is in the open space near Clattern-bridge, in front of the Assize Courts, at the entrance of the Market-place, where some of the coronations took place.

* This part of the arrangement may as well be omitted.

EXTENSION OF SCAGLIOLA.—I observed a remark in your last number in which I cordially agree, that is, let plastic material represent itself. Scagliola is a very beautiful means of decoration, and particularly well suited to our sooty town, presenting as it does a highly polished surface. But why should it represent marble? Why not form regular patterns with the same means? It would be worth while to go to some expense, as the colour is permanent: its beauty might be increased by adding the refuse metal from glass works; the refuse even from the green bottles I have seen used with good effect. There is no reason why scagliola should then be confined to columns and pilasters; it might be employed to give effect to styles in the decoration of clubs and public rooms, the panel being kept in flat colour for contrast. I hope the exhibition of '51 will show us that scagliola is capable of expansion, and is not to be used only as an imitative material.—COMPASS.

MONUMENTS TO SIR ROBERT PEEL.—Propositions are already starting up throughout the country for the collection of subscriptions for the erection of monuments to this distinguished gentleman. One of these relates to the re-erection of Drayton Bassett Church, the place of his interment; another to the erection of a statue or monument at Manchester, the subscription to which at once opened with 300l., expected to be increased to 1,000l. and upwards on the market-day following; and another is for the collection of a penny subscription throughout the country, for the erection of a poor man's monument to Sir Robert's memory.

EFFECT OF SHOT ON IRON VESSELS.—Some experiments have been made at Portsmouth, from which it appears that the shot is shivered to atoms on striking the iron; the fractured pieces of shot, the splinters from the iron plates, and the longer and more dangerous pins from the iron ribs, rendering the striking of a large hollow shot more terrific to an iron vessel than the bursting of a shell on board. A butt is to be practised at where the iron plates will be cased inside with strong planking.

ANOTHER BREAK-DOWN OF A FRENCH SUSPENSION BRIDGE.—Near a town called Fumel (Lot-et-Garonne), a suspension-bridge over the river Lot recently broke down, first in the centre and then at the chains, as four men were repairing it. Three men were drowned, and others severely injured. It is said that most of the suspension-bridges in France, with the exception of those very recently constructed, are in a similarly dangerous condition.

"A PLAN FOR THE VERY POOR," in the first general Report of the Committee of the Leicester-square "Mount St. Bernard Hospice." It gives some startling details of the condition of the poor in the metropolis, and ought to obtain for this society a further increase of public support.

TENDERS

For works to be performed for the Committee of Governors of Emanuel Hospital, Westminster, in the erection of a School and Dormitory for the Boys admitted into that Institution. Mr. Bunning, architect.

Cubitt and Co.	£1,650 0 0
Pritchard	1,647 0 0
Piper	1,491 0 0
Grimaldell	1,644 0 0
Holland	1,523 0 0
King	1,647 0 0

The architect's estimate was £1,500.

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